



February 18, 2022

Planning Commissioners
Kasson Township
P.O. Box 62
Maple City, MI 49664

RE: Planned Development Amendment for Cloninger Farm

Dear Planning Commission Members:

Introduction

This matter has come up quickly at the request of Bryan Cloninger who owns a 78-acre mixed residential/camping facility in the northwest part of the Township. He would like to make changes to his site plan and is under a lot of reported immediate financial pressure to make the changes. The question discussed below is whether the changes would be considered a major change (amendment) requiring Planning Commission approval after a public hearing, or whether the Zoning Administrator could make the changes as minor amendment. Zoning Administrator Tim Cypher and I have had fairly extensive recent discussions with Bryan Cloninger about this.

As you will note below, it is my view, and Tim agrees, that the changes would constitute a minor amendment, but Tim and I felt that the Planning Commission should be made aware of the requested changes and be given the opportunity to weigh in on the matter.

Background

In 2017 Bryan Cloninger was granted a First Amended Planned Development (“PUD”) and Special Use Permit (“SUP”) for a *hybrid residential clustering/camping* development on a 78-acre property at the northwest corner of County Road 616 and Tremaine Road in the northwest part of the Township. The property at issue is located in the Township Zoning Ordinance’s (“ZO”) Forested (“F”) District. The development is known as the Cloninger Farm. The PUD, which included a rezoning, incorporated by reference, a October 22, 2015 Gourdie Fraser Site Plan, one page of which is inset below, which shows the whole 78-acre development:

Kent E. Gerberding
Michael I. Conlon
Catherine D. Jasinski
Thomas A. Grier
Julie A. Gillum
Jeffrey R. Wingfield
Kathryn E. Glancy
Thomas J. Waters

Of Counsel:

Richard W. Ford

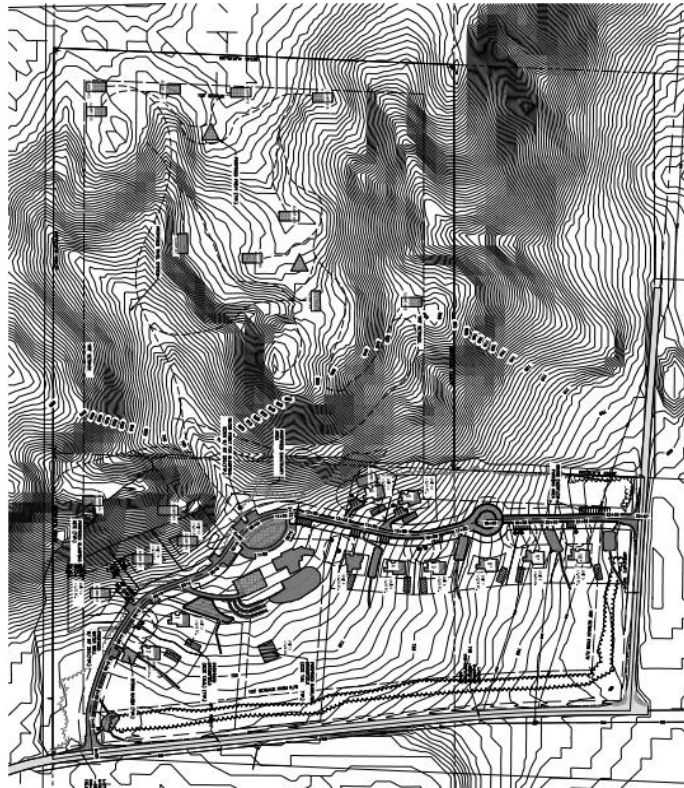
John W. Kline

Harry T. Running
(1911 – 1992)

William L. Wise
(1928 – 2014)

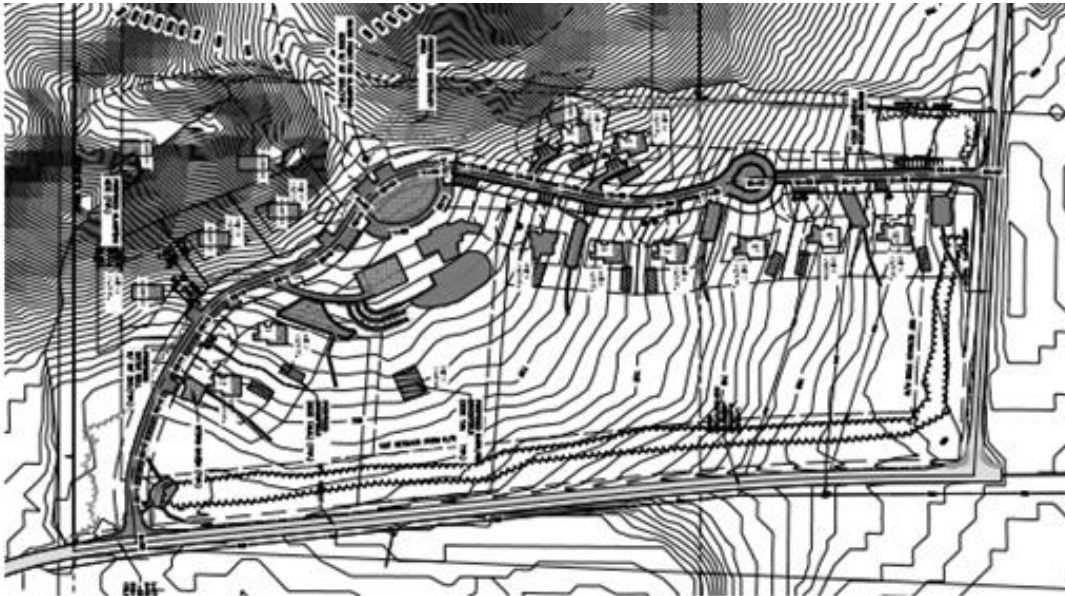
Miles C. Gerberding
(1930 – 2015)

Traverse City
1501 Cass Street, Suite D
PO Box 686
Traverse City, MI
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The *north* end of the site plan is shown at the *top* of the drawing. There were two parts of the development generally. Part 1 consisted of the residential component. The residential component was situated to the south along the road shown. Part 2 - the camping component - consisted of *rustic glamping* sites which were spread throughout the property, but most of which were located within the northern 40 acres of open space. There is also central manager's residence/ event center on the site.

ZO Section 4.11.3.B. permits the use of a PUD in the Forested zoning district. The PD allows for clustering, and greater residential density, in return for the preservation of open space (70 percent of the open space). Under the clustered PUD, **14** one-half acre site condominium **units** (i.e., lots) were approved, 10 of which of which were initially to include 1,500 square- foot three- bedroom single family homes. The four other lots could include glamping camp sites until homes were built there. The 14 condo lots are shown grouped around the private road to the south:

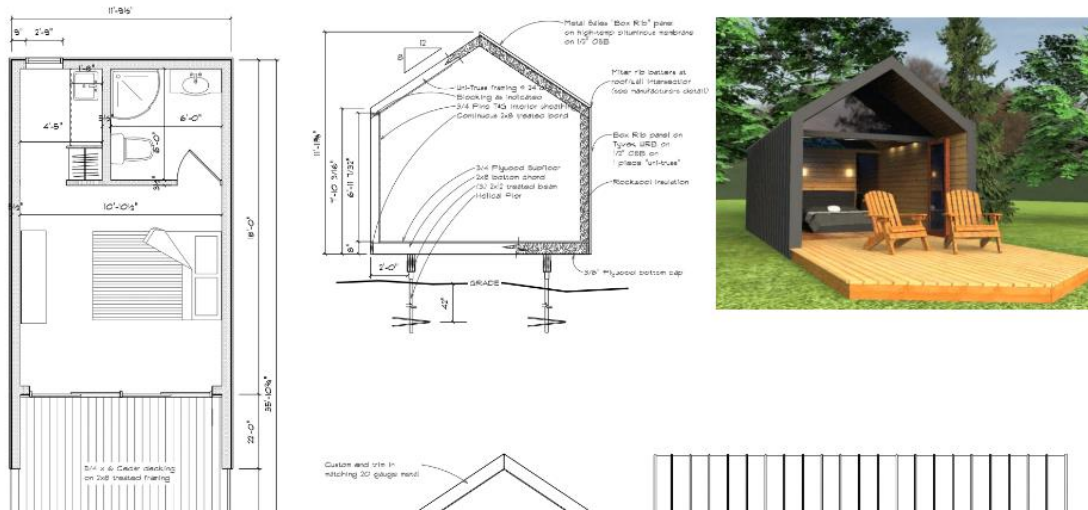


Other ZO SUP provisions of the Forested District were relied upon to allow the camping component of the development.

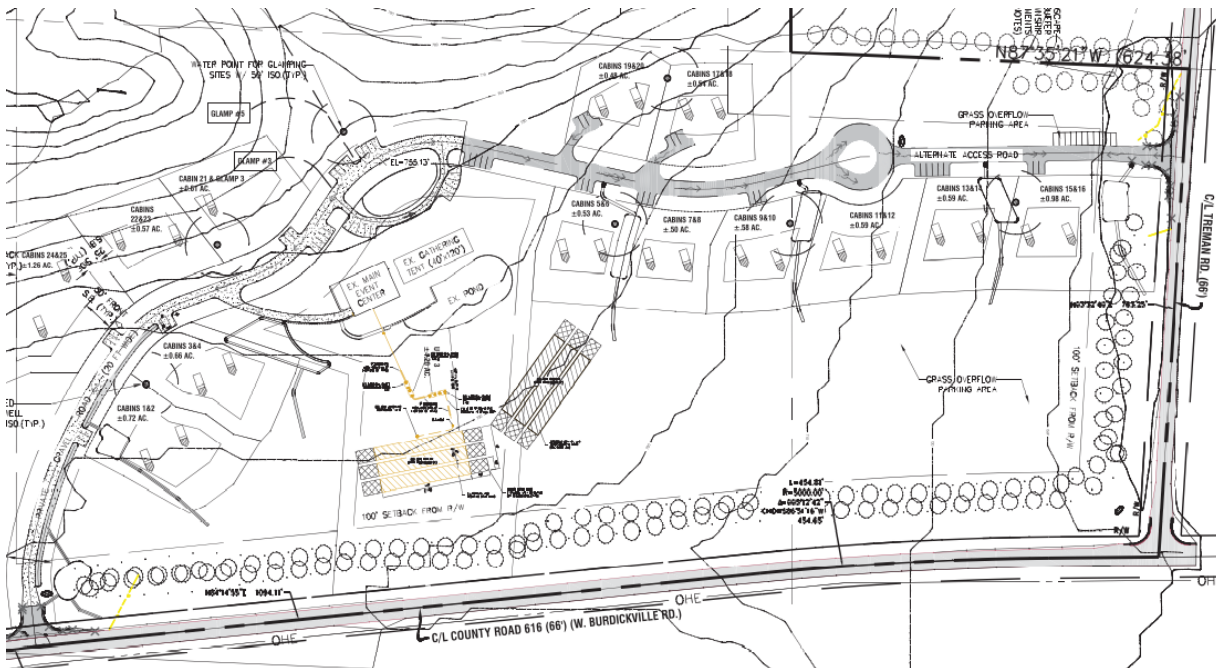
Requested Amendment

Under the current site plan, 10 of the lots are reserved to contain three-bedroom 1,500 square foot homes. The other four lots may contain one glamping campsite (*each with up to two tent platforms with up to eight persons* on a temporary basis before single family homes are eventually built there.) Ultimately, there could be a total of 14 homes coinciding with the 14 lots. To date, no single- family home has been built on any of the 14 site condo lots.

Bryan Cloninger would like to *amend* the site plan to allow two (temporary removable) small resort cabins (each with one bedroom and one bath) on each of the 14 condo lots. These are proposed to be allowed subject to restrictions so that they would only be used for short-term daily or weekly resort-cabin rental. Plans and elevated drawings of the cabins are inset below. It is my understanding that the resort cabins will be about 400 square feet in size more or less. They could eventually be removed if and when single-family homes are constructed on all 14 of the condo lots.



The proposed amended site plan is shown below. Two of the resort cabins would be located within each of the 14 condo lots, for a total of 28.



The issue for the Township Zoning Administrator (“ZA”) to consider is whether the proposed amendment would constitute a *Minor Amendment*, which the ZA would need to approve, or *Major Amendment* which would require Planning Commission approval following a public hearing. This determination would be assessed under ZO Section 8.12. which is inserted below, with my [comment] as to each subsection:

SECTION 8.12 AMENDMENTS TO APPROVED DEVELOPMENT PLANS

- A. Amendments to an approved development site plan may be made by the Planning Commission upon written request by the landowner.

Minor changes to an approved development site plan may be approved by the Zoning Administrator after construction has begun, provided no such changes results in any of the following:

1. **A significant change in use of character or the development.**

[No. The development already envisions resort camping as its primary function.]

2. **An increase in overall coverage of structures.**

[No. The temporary resort cabins will be about 400 square feet each for a total of 800 square feet for two. The PUD allows up to 14 1,500 square foot homes.]

3. **An increase in the intensity of use.**

[No. The use of the two one-bedroom resort cabins should not be greater than the three-bedroom homes, or of the twin glamping camping sites.]

4. **A reduction in the required open space.**

[No. There is no change to the open space on site. The cabins would lie within the confines of the 14 condo lots.]

5. **A change that may increase the storm water run-off to adjacent properties.**

[No. The run off of the two cabins – 400 square feet each - should be less than that for a 1,500 square-foot home.]

6. **A reduction in required off-street parking and loading.**

[No. The twin cabins would use the same parking sites as would have been used by the two tent glamping sites (for four of the lots) or by the occupants of the 10 lots set aside initially for single family homes.]

7. A reduction in required pavement widths or utility sizes.

[No. None apparent on the site plan.]

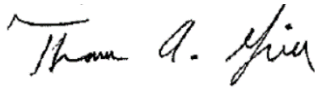
8. A significant increase in traffic on public streets or an increase in the burden on public utilities or services.

[No. There should be no more traffic associated with the twin one-bedroom cabins that otherwise would be associated with four twin glamping camping sites and 10 single family homes, or a total of 14 single family homes.]

Full copies of the site plans are attached for reference.

If anyone should have any further questions or concerns, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas A. Grier". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas A. Grier

TAG/jr